

in the lane to my right a driver is being followed by a police car with red and blue lights blinking -- this one can't be a speeding ticket as

suddenly the rain comes down in a giant wash and all the cars stop and

even with the windows up I can smell somebody's clutch burning out

hope it's not mine as

the wall of water diminishes and we go back to first gear as we are a long way from Johnny Carson's monologue tonight

we are a long way away from anything as I have memorized the shape of the car in front of me and the shape of the driver's head

what

I can see of it from above the headrest of his seat and his license number: STK 405 and his bumper sticker: HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR RAT TODAY?

suddenly I have the urge to urinate while 17 miles from where I live as another wall of water comes down and the man on the radio announces that there will be a 70 percent chance of showers tomorrow night.

THIS IS FREE, TAKE IT, AND FEEL BETTER

bad-natured people are everywhere like flies upon a dead horse in a hot summer

they are set upon objects, things, situations

in a rather congenial viciousness

that is most often mistaken for courage

but generally

(setting aside bad companionship, bad diet, bad breeding) most acrimonious nerves

(setting aside bad elimination of wastes and so forth) are caused by

failure.

and they fail

first

because they are simply incompetent at what they try to do or be

and second

because of an educational system

and a

national philosophy which

beckons them higher than they are able.

in other words, they are not failures
but unrealistic forces and demands make them feel to be
failures
and so business is good for the
psychiatrists and psychologists
and the jails and the mental
institutions
(which are only dumping grounds for the overload
from unhappy homes, thieves, skid row and etc.)
there is no such thing as failure, there is only the
comparative grind, there is only the concept of
failure.
and a \$175 an hour shrink won't even tell you
this
because
he's been taught by the book
just like his victim.

so take this poem and keep it somewhere for
ready reference

because it might not only save you
money
it might also save your
sad and angry
ass.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

LITERARY NOTES OF NOTE::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::

Green Isle in the Sea: An Informal History of the Alternative Press, 1960-85 (edit. Diane Kruckow & Curt Johnson), \$12.50 bargain fm. December Press, 3093 Dato, Highland Park IL 60035. ¶ Very successful translations into German: Gerald Locklin's Die Jagd Nach Dem Verschwundenen Blauen Volkswagen and Die Rosskur, each 15 DM fm. Maro Verlag, Riedingerstr. 24, 8900 Augsburg, Germany. ¶ Practising Angels (edit. Michael Mayo), contemporary anthology of San Francisco poetry, mostly reprinted fm. mags, \$9.95 fm. Seismograph Publ., P.O. Box 170127, San Francisco CA 94117. ¶ Well done, The Vampire in Verse: An Anthology (edit. S. Moore) 196 pp., unpriced fm. Count Dracula Fan Club, Penthouse North, 29 Washington Square West, New York NY 10011. ¶ Also well done, 1986 Poet's Market (edit. Judson Jerome) \$16.95 fm. Writer's Digest Books, 9933 Alliance Rd., Cincinnati OH 45242. ¶ Reviews continued in Wormwood: 104.